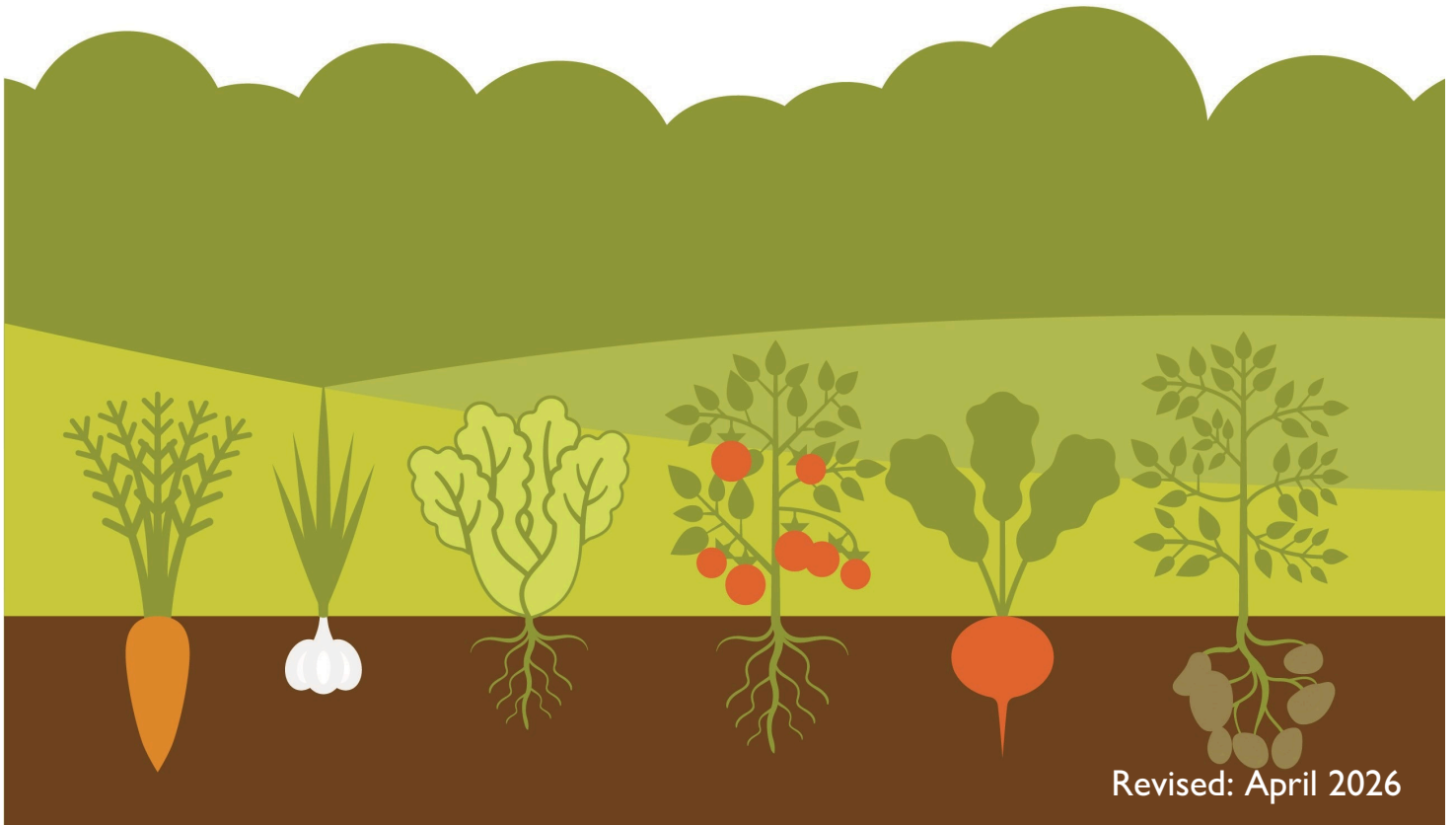


VENDOR HANDBOOK



healthy
by
design

Gardeners' Market



Revised: April 2026

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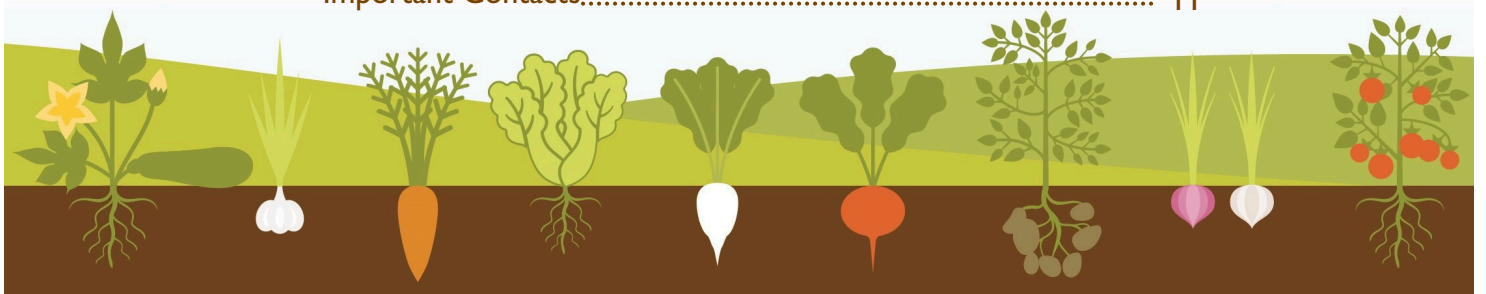
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I. General Information

The Healthy By Design (HBD) Gardeners’ Market is a community market at South Park in Billings, Montana. The goals of the Gardeners’ Market are:

- Provide weekly access to fresh, affordable, local produce from June - October
- Create opportunities for the community to engage in healthy eating and active living activities
- Support healthy social connections



The Gardeners’ Market is an initiative of the HBD Coalition, a community health coalition created by the Alliance - Billings Clinic, RiverStone Health, and Intermountain Health St. Vincent Regional Hospital - working to make the healthy choice, the easy choice in Yellowstone County. Our partnership with Billings Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands allows for the market to be held at South Park. To adhere to the mission and goals of HBD and the Gardeners’ Market, the market must have at least 50% of vendors selling produce each week.

Location: South Park in Billings, MT
(Intersection of S. 28th Street and 7th Avenue S.)

Time: 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Dates: Thursdays beginning the second week of June through the first week in October

Weather: The Gardeners' Market runs rain or shine. If there is inclement weather, staff may delay the start of the market or end it early.



Management

Market staff carry out handbook guidelines. This includes overseeing set up, providing information, and making sure vendors follow Gardeners’ Market rules. The market managers, along with Healthy By Design staff, are responsible for addressing customer and vendor concerns and discussing market operations with the media (e.g., newspaper, television, radio). Complaints should be sent to market@hbdc.org and will be taken to the HBD Operations Committee.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Healthy By Design’s initiatives and the community that we serve are located on the land of tribal nations whose time in the area ranged from over tens of thousands years to hundreds of years. These tribes included: The Assiniboine (Nakoda), Blackfeet (Amskapi Pikuni), Northern Cheyenne (Tsetsêhesêstâhase/So’taahe), Crow (Apsaalooke), Gros Ventre (A’aninin), and Sioux (Dakota/Lakota). We recognize their connection to this region and give thanks for the opportunity to grow, and harvest food, and collaborate with our partners on their traditional homelands.

More information about Healthy By Design and the Gardeners’ Market can be found at:

 www.hbdc.org

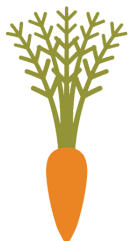
 market@hbdc.org

 406.651.6444

Mailing Address:
Healthy By Design
123 South 27th Street
Billings, MT 59101

 HBDYellowstone

 HBDYellowstone





2. Vendor Information

Montana farmers, ranchers, gardeners, bakers, and crafters may sell at the market. Produce must be grown and harvested by the vendor.

Vendors cannot sell on behalf of other farmers, ranchers, gardeners, bakers or crafters and cannot purchase and/or re-sell goods.

Market Participation

Before selling at the Gardeners' Market, all vendors are required to:

- Read the 'Gardeners' Market Handbook'
- Complete a market training and required forms
 - Gardeners' Market staff can help vendors fill out forms, if needed
- Inform the market manager of intent to sell at least two days in advance (Tuesday before market)
 - If vendors show up at the market without informing the market manager, they may not be allowed to set up
- E-mail market@hbdyc.org or leave a message at 406.651.6444 if you have any questions.

Fees

There is no cost to set up at the Gardeners' Market; by not charging a vendor fee, we request that prices are as low as reasonable.

Set Up and Tear Down

Vendors may set up any time between 2:30 pm and 3:45 pm, ready to sell by 4:00pm. Vendors are permitted to drive on paved areas as instructed by the market manager. Vendors cannot drive on the grass of the park unless permitted and approved by market staff and Parks and Recreation. Vendors must move their vehicles immediately after unloading and no products may be sold before 4:00pm.

**Vendor Set Up:
2:30 pm - 3:45 pm**

Market staff will designate someone to ring a bell at 4:00 pm to indicate when the market begins and vendors can start selling product. Vendors CANNOT sell before 4:00 pm. Vendors must leave the property by 6:30 pm. Each vendor is responsible for their own table display and shade.

In a situation of extreme heat and lack of proper shade, market staff can lend tents if available to vendors who do not have one that week.

Sign In and Out:

Vendors must:

- Sign in with staff before the market starts at 4:00 pm
- Check in with staff before driving into the market (staff reserve the right to deny driving into the park if unsafe or past the appropriate time)
- Inform the market manager before setting up if leaving before 6:00 pm - booth location may be changed if leaving before 6:00 pm
- Sign out by reporting sales at the end of each market (this information is used for evaluation and grant reporting purposes only)



Absences:

Vendors are responsible for notifying staff of cancellation by Thursday at 1:00 pm. Two no call/no shows during the season (including inclement weather days) may result in loss of space for the rest of the season.



Vending Space:

Weekly vendor maps are created by staff according to which vendors are scheduled to be at the market. Market staff sets spacing Thursday afternoons based on vendors. Tent shades may be used if they are staked into the ground (stakes must be less than 10 inches long according to park regulations).

Each vendor is responsible for keeping their space tidy and for cleaning up at the close of the market. This includes taking away trash. Vendors who do not respect their surroundings may be asked not to return. Vendors are expected to stay for the entire duration of the market, unless otherwise approved by market staff.

Conduct and Safety:

- Vendors are expected to be safe and kind at the market. Any behavior thought to be harmful to the operation of the market may result in denial of the vendor to sell. Calling attention to your products in a loud manner is discouraged and may be limited by staff. Vendors should be fully clothed, including shirts and shoes. Vendors may play music, but should be aware of the volume and make sure it does not prevent transactions.
- Vendor vehicles, tables, tent shades, and signs must be maintained and used in a safe manner. All vendors who put up tent shades are required to have the ability to anchor them to the ground and legs must be firmly locked into place. Vendors must stay with their tents and products the entire duration of the market.
- No tobacco products, alcohol, or other controlled substances are allowed at the Gardeners' Market. Any vendor who is under the influence of controlled substances while at the market will be expelled.
- Refrain from bringing pets to the market; service animals are allowed.
- The market takes no responsibility for the safety or whereabouts of children, particularly during set up and tear down. The Gardeners' Market is not responsible for loss or damage of property.

3. Product Guidelines

Products sold at the Gardeners' Market are limited to:

- Fresh produce
- Nursery stock
- Meat
- Eggs
- Food products and beverages approved by Market Staff with appropriate licensing
- Handcrafted items



In keeping with our goal of making the healthy choice, the easy choice, our advisory board has made the decision to **prohibit certain products with notable amounts of high fructose corn syrup, artificial colors or flavors, artificial trans fats, and those which include sugar as the primary ingredient. Items that fall into this category include candy, sodas, lemonade, frostings, cinnamon rolls, cake/brownie mixes, and other quick bread items.** If you are interested in selling a product that contains these ingredients, but is not included in the list above, please contact the market manager to discuss further. Vendors are encouraged to consider ways to improve the nutritional quality of their products by consulting Table 2 (Pg. 10). Please remember, it is ultimately the advisory board's decision if the product fits within the mission and values of this market.



Fresh Produce

Fresh produce includes fresh fruits and vegetables, herbs, mushrooms, flowers, and nursery stock. The HBD Gardeners' Market allows the sale of Controlled Atmosphere (CA) or cold stored fruits and vegetables. If the produce has been stored, the vendor is responsible for telling customers that his/her product is not from that growing season or has been stored.

All produce must be grown in Montana and sold by the gardener/farmer or a family member, partner, or employee. Vendors must be an active owner or operator of the gardening/farming operation and may not be operating the business under a franchise agreement. The vendor must grow all plants and flowers from seed, cuttings, plugs, bulbs or plant division. All finished products offered for sale must have been grown by the vendor. No resale products are allowed.

ALL produce vendors need a Produce Dealer License issued by the State of Montana. Any vendor with gross sales less than \$25,000 should apply for an Exempt Produce license free of charge. Vendors with annual gross sales over \$25,000 must have a Commercial Produce Dealer License. For a Produce Dealer License application visit <https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/N-P/Produce-Pages/Produce-Licensing/>.

Vendors wanting to sell plant stock must have a Nursery License issued by the State of Montana for a cost of \$25. Licenses can be purchased at <https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/N-P/Nursery-Pages/Nursery-Licensing>.

Eggs

Eggs must:

- Be clean (no dirt, feces, or other foreign matter), free of cracks and stored in clean cartons
- Be kept at 45 degrees Fahrenheit for storage and display (vendors cannot sell eggs that have been on display if they have not been kept at 45 degrees Fahrenheit.)
- Carry a label indicating the current name, address, and phone number of the farm owner or operator selling the eggs

Animal Products (Meat and Dairy)

Animal products such as beef, chicken, pork or any other type of meat MAY BE sold with approval prior to selling at the market and must have a valid Retail Food License before selling at the market.

Preserves

Vendors may make and sell preserves that are defined as processed fruit or berry jams, jellies, compotes, fruit butters, dried fruit, marmalades, chutneys, fruit syrups or similar fruit products that have a pH of 4.6 or below without a food license. A list of approved fruit can be found in the Montana Food Consumer Safety Farmer's Market Guidelines:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/publichealth/FCS/CottageFood/10.1.23FarmersMarketGuidance.pdf>

Preserves made from locally sourced ingredients are encouraged. All preserves MUST be processed, packaged and sealed using a sterile process and have detailed ingredient information attached to them.





Changes to Montana Cottage Food Bill:

In 2021, the Montana Legislature authorized the Montana Local Food Choice Act. This law allows local farmers markets to set guidelines for homemade food products. In accordance with this law, the HBD Gardeners' Market requires a license for select products listed in the table below made in a home kitchen to be sold. Products made from locally sourced ingredients are encouraged. The Gardeners' Market is a place where families can get wholesome goods. Vendors must inform customers that products are homemade and have not been licensed, permitted, certified, packaged, labeled, or inspected per any official regulations. To learn more, please visit the Montana Food Consumer Safety Farmer's Market Guidelines <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/publichealth/FCS/CottageFood/FarmersMarketGuidelines.pdf>.

CAN be sold without a license

- Loaf breads, rolls, biscuits, quick breads, and muffins that do not contain meat or cheese
- Crackers
- Cereals, trail mixes or granola, nuts, and nut mixes
- Fruit pies
- Dried fruits such as apples, apricots, grapefruit, lemons, limes, mangos, nectarines, oranges, peaches, plums, pomegranates, tangerines, berries, cherries, currants, and grapes
- Recombining and packing of dry herbs, seasonings, or mixtures

Please be thoughtful in your ingredients for the health of the community. See Table 1 on Pg. 10 for healthier baking alternatives

CANNOT be sold without a license:

- Salsas
- Pickles
- Salad dressings
- Herb-in-oil/vinegar mixtures
- Sauerkraut or Pepper Jelly
- Custard style pies, unbaked pies with fresh fruit, pies that require refrigeration after baking
- Frosting containing dairy
- Preserves with pH of 4.7 or higher
- Dairy products
- Products requiring refrigeration
- Meat
- Homemade beverages (lemonades/teas)

If your product is not listed above, ask a market manager

Labeling

Products must be labeled either individually or collectively located on the booth using a larger visible label with all ingredients used for every product. If a vendor chooses to use one label at their booth to cover all of their products, this label must be accurate and displayed at all times. Failure to do so will result in discontinuation of sales. The product name, ingredient list, vendor name and address, and product weight must all be included on the label. See Image 1 on Pg. 10 for an example label.

Handcrafted Products

Crafters are persons who make products with their own hands. Most of the tools and equipment used must require skills, personal handling, and/or guidance by the crafter. Crafters should try to use Montana materials as much as possible and must create their products in Montana.

The Gardeners' Market reserves the right to deny anyone from selling and/or any product from being sold. Products not covered under this section will be given special consideration by the market manager and/or the Healthy By Design Coalition.



4. Guidelines for Selling at the Market

Product Pricing

The market does not currently have a minimum or maximum pricing policy, but reserves the right to create one. Pricing is the responsibility of the individual vendor. Vendors are encouraged to consider affordability when pricing their products.

Donated Produce

With the exception of samples, vendors may not give away their products for free at the Gardeners' Market. Vendors are encouraged to take any unsold goods to the Women, Infants, Children (WIC) Program at RiverStone Health and/or Billings Family Service in a timely manner.

Scales

Vendors selling produce by weight must provide their own accurate scales.

Signage

Vendors are encouraged, but not required, to post a sign identifying their garden or farm. Displays and signs must not affect others' ability to sell or shop. Signs indicating how produce is grown, such as "pesticide-free", "all natural", etc. can be used, if vendors fill out a Produce Labeling Form which includes an attestation statement. Claims to be "organic", however, cannot be used unless certified through the state or federal process.

Sampling

With prior approval, vendors may provide products for customers to sample. Cut samples cannot be modified or altered. For example, tomatoes can not be sampled as salsa. Requirements include a handwashing station. See example on page 9.

Customer Complaints

Customers who have a complaint about produce purchases should be given a full refund or replacement of the same value by the vendor. If produce is overripe and must be eaten the same day, the customer must be informed in advance of sale. If a customer wants to exchange only a partial bag of produce, only partial credit is due. Contact a market manager for questions about refunds.

Required Market Training

Any vendor who sells at the Gardeners' Market is required to go through an annual training by the market staff. A vendor who partakes in the annual training CANNOT train other workers to sell at their booth. The farmer, rancher, gardener, or crafter may allow other family members, partners, or employees to sell in his/her/their place as long as at least one person per booth has completed an annual training. No on-site trainings during market hours are provided. Contact us to set up additional trainings.

5. Market Transactions

Vendors are responsible for having correct change. At the end of each market, vendors must report the dollar amount sold to staff. All vendors will be trained on how to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), debit, and credit tokens. Eligible vendors who plan on selling at the market at least 3 times during the season are encouraged to be trained to accept Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) benefits and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) coupons. Accepting these forms of payment is of no cost to the vendor. Additional training is required prior to accepting WIC FMNP and SFMNP payment.

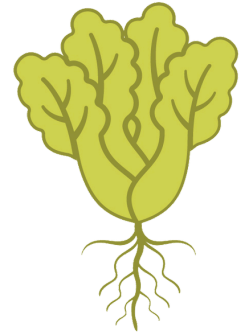




Tokens

Vendors have a no cost opportunity to accept SNAP benefits, debit and credit cards through the Gardeners' Market. Having a variety of payment options allows customers more flexibility to buy a range of products and enables vendors to sell more product.

A point-of-sale (POS) machine will be located at the market fiscal booth. All major credit cards and EBT card may be used. Customers will run their cards at the booth and receive wooden tokens in \$2 for SNAP and \$5 debit/credit values. Vendors accept these forms of payment as they would cash.



SNAP Tokens (Brown/wooden with black writing - \$2 increment):

- SNAP eligible products are any food product sold at the market with the exception of hot food items
- SNAP tokens have a \$2 value
- NO cash may be given back to customers using SNAP tokens
- Customers CANNOT purchase handcraft items using SNAP tokens
- Vendors are to treat SNAP customers fairly



Double SNAP Dollars Tokens (Orange with black/green writing - \$2 increment):

- * **Funding for the Double SNAP Dollars incentive program is not guaranteed. Please reach out to the market managers prior to selling at the Gardeners' Market to learn more.** *
- Double SNAP Dollars may ONLY purchase fresh fruits and vegetables
- NO cash may be given back to customers using DSD tokens



Debit/Credit Tokens (wooden with red writing - \$5 increment):

- Customers using debit/credit tokens may purchase ANY market product
- Debit/credit tokens have a \$5 value
- Customers using debit/credit tokens can receive cash back for any unused portion of the token value



Women, Infants, and Children Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (WIC FMNP):

- WIC FMNP e-benefits can ONLY purchase produce. Healthy By Design encourages vendors to accept WIC FMNP vouchers.
- Vendors must receive a separate training from WIC if interested in accepting WIC FMNP benefits. Please see Pg. 11 for WIC contact and training information.
- NO cash may be given back to customers

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP):

- SFMNP coupons can ONLY purchase produce and honey. Healthy By Design encourages vendors to accept SFMNP coupons.
- Vendors must receive a separate training to accept SFMNP coupons if interested in accepting SFMNP coupons. Please see Pg. 11 for contact and training information.
- NO cash may be given back to customers using SFMNP Coupons



A training is required before eligible vendors can accept any additional payment options. Speak with a market manager to schedule a time for all of your sales representatives to get trained.

Token Redemption:

At the end of each market, vendors are encouraged to fill out the Vendor Token Tracking form and bring it and their tokens to the fiscal booth. Staff will make every effort to pay vendors in cash at the end of each market. However, if petty cash runs out, vendors may be issued a check to be mailed to the address on file. Only persons authorized by each vendor may pick up the checks.

6. Other

Vendors are to contact market staff directly for any of the following:

- Language translation
- Security
- Incident reporting
- Community/Non-profit tabling
- Market evaluation
- Additional trainings



Handwashing

A handwashing station is only a requirement for those vendors interested in providing samples.

This is only an example.

HANDWASHING STATION

Use it OFTEN!

- Use CLEAN water jugs:
1. SANITIZE with 2 tbsp unscented bleach in 1 gallon of water – SLOSH to cover all surfaces.
 2. Let STAND 5 minutes and DRAIN. DO NOT RINSE!
 3. FILL with approved drinking water

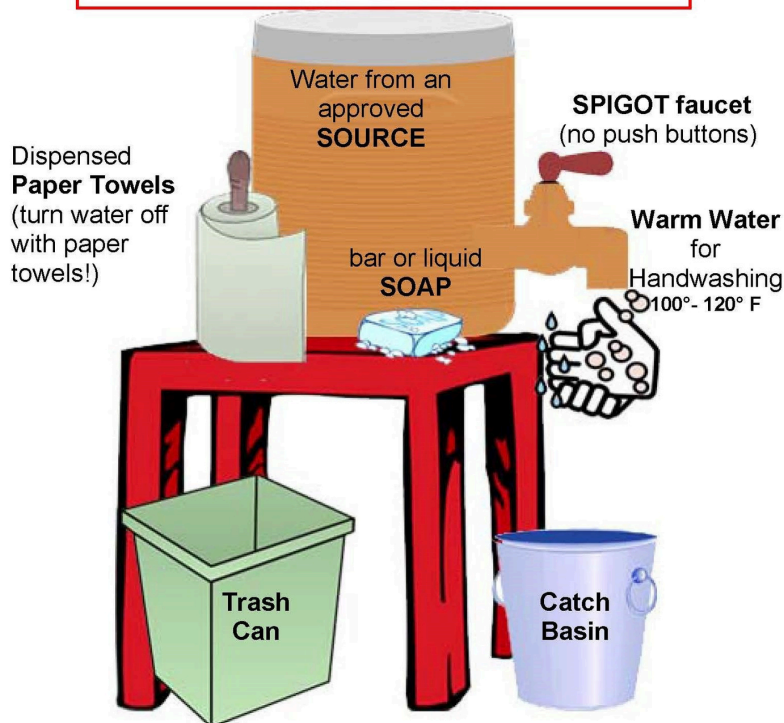


Table I: Healthier Alternatives for Baking

Instead of this:	Try this:
White Sugar	Reduce amount of sugar; substitute with Honey, Pure Maple Syrup, Coconut Sugar, Unsweetened Applesauce, Dates or Date Paste, Mashed Bananas, Splenda Brown Sugar, Stevia or Monk Fruit
White flour	Whole-Grain Flour, Almond Flour, Oat Flour, Coconut Flour, Chickpea Flour, Pureed Beans, Protein Powder
Butter or Oil	Avocado Oil, Olive Oil, Greek Yogurt, Ricotta Cheese, Mashed Bananas, Unsweetened Applesauce, Pureed Pumpkin, Avocados
Dairy	Substitute higher fat dairy for low or no-fat dairy, Evaporated Milk, Greek Yogurt, Soy Milk, Almond or other nut milk Coconut milk
Eggs	Banana, Flax Seed, Applesauce, Egg Replacement, Chia Seeds, Silken Tofu, Mashed Sweet Potato

Source: Cox, C. J. (2019, October 8). Healthy Baking Alternatives. EatRight. Retrieved April 1, 2022, from <https://www.eatright.org/food/planning-and-prep/cooking-tips-and-trends/healthy-baking-alternatives>

Image 1: Example Product Label

MADE IN A HOME KITCHEN THAT IS NOT SUBJECT TO RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENT REGULATIONS OR INSPECTIONS

Zucchini Muffins

Ingredients: Whole wheat flour, olive oil, zucchini, milk, chocolate chips (sugar, chocolate, cocoa butter, milkfat, soy lecithin, natural flavors) honey, vanilla extract, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, ground ginger.

Contains: Wheat, milk, eggs, soy.

Mary Smith
123 Jolly Ln.
Billings, MT 59101

Net Wt. 3oz

Important Contacts

Gardeners' Market Staff..... 406.651.6444

RiverStone Health, Environmental Health Services..... 406.256.2770

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) benefits training..... 406.247.3370

Farm Connect Montana

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) coupons training..... 406.926.1625

Allies in Aging

Reimbursement for SFMNP Coupons..... 406.294.1590